

Doing confirmation with *ja/nee hoor*

Sequential and prosodic characteristics of a Dutch discourse particle*

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This paper offers sequential-interactive and prosodic observations on the confirmation forms *ja hoor/nee hoor* ('yes' + particle *hoor*/ 'no' + *hoor*) in Dutch talk-in-interaction, as part of a larger analysis of the form and function of the particle *hoor*. We show that *ja/nee hoor* is used as a marked confirmation in sequentially specifiable context-types. When used as a response to queries, the speaker marks doing confirmation as programmatically motivated. When used in environments that further sequence expansion, *ja/nee hoor* resists such expansion. Thus, the use of *ja/nee hoor* is motivated by an orientation to multiple levels of discourse organization. *Ja/nee hoor* is associated with recurrent pitch contours which are systematically distributed across environments of use. We discuss our findings in relation to previous findings on the use of *hoor* in Dutch.

1. Introduction

Participants in Dutch talk in interaction routinely use a number of discourse particles to articulate or fine-tune the discursive status of the ongoing turn. Several of these particles occur in clause-final, or tag-position, and have a fairly straightforward response-eliciting function; *hè* is a particularly common Example (see Jefferson 1981). But Dutch also has a final particle that does not appear to elicit a particular type of response: the particle *hoor* (literally 'hear', but native speakers of Dutch do not link its meaning to 'hearing'). Its general function has been described as retro-actively reinforcing or emphasizing an aspect of the preceding utterance (Kirsner 2000, 2003, Wenzel 2002: 228), but depending on its specific environment of use and the kind of action implemented by the utterance it is attached to, *hoor* may be said to fulfill such heterogeneous functions

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as mitigating the action (ten Have 2007: 126–128), signaling the speaker's sincerity (Berenst 1978), downtoning the assertion that the speaker is making (Kirsner 2000), or articulating the action's reassuring character (Kirsner 2003).

Kirsner and colleagues (Kirsner and Deen 1990, Kirsner et al. 1994, Kirsner and van Heuven 1996, Kirsner 2000, 2003) have attempted to account for the various functions of *hoor* in terms of a contextually-governed interplay between four semantic parameters: 'no-question status', 'recipient involvement', 'dominance' and 'friendliness'. While their work offers an elegant model for dealing with the variation in function associated with *hoor*, their notion of 'context' is rather abstract, and their analysis based mainly on isolated utterances. An important question is whether a similar characterization of function would be arrived at if the starting point of analysis were a detailed consideration of instances of the particle in actual use.

Mazeland (2010) proposes a description of the use of *hoor* that is based on an analysis of real, specifiable sequential environments in which the particle is used. In this paper we elaborate on a subset of Mazeland's data: about 30 cases in which *hoor* is used for doing confirmation as part of responses of the type *ja hoor* ('yes'+*hoor*) and *nee hoor* ('no'+*hoor*).¹ We focus on these because we have observed some interesting correlations between the sequential-interactive functions of *ja/nee hoor* and its prosodic characteristics; in particular, its associated pitch contours.

Kirsner and colleagues have presented the prosody of *hoor* as somewhat problematic: Kirsner et al. (1994) suggest that as a discourse particle which tries to actively engage the recipient, *hoor* should be highly compatible with a final rising contour, which in their model of intonational meaning serves to signal an 'appeal' to the listener. On the other hand, since *hoor* does not function to elicit a response, it should also be compatible with a final falling contour: part of the function of *hoor* is to signal 'finality'. In a subsequent listening experiment, Kirsner and Van Heuven (1996) find that listeners generally judge utterances ending in discourse particles including *hoor* to be most "natural" with a rising contour; however, in the case of *hoor*, utterances with a falling contour are acceptable too. Of course, these findings warrant a systematic study of the prosodic patterns *hoor* is associated with in actual usage. In this paper we offer preliminary observations on *ja/nee hoor*, which suggest, firstly, that *hoor* is associated with a number of recurrent pitch patterns, and, secondly, that a sequential-interactive approach to describing its function may help us understand the variation.

After sketching a general framework for the analysis of *ja/nee hoor* (Section 2), we will offer a sequential analysis of specific contexts in which *ja/nee hoor* responses occur (Section 3), and a description of their associated pitch contours (Section 4). Section 5 concludes.

1. All instances are taken from a set of 28 phone calls of about 120 minutes in total. 6 calls from this set are calls within an institutional or professional setting, most of them calls with an employee of a travel agency (5 calls, in total 30 minutes).

2. “Marked” and “unmarked” confirmation forms

The main site of occurrence of *ja/nee hoor* in our data is the ‘second pair-part’ turn. As is well known, participants in talk in interaction organize communicative projects in ordered sequences of actions, and the basic format for organizing sequences is the *adjacency pair* (see Schegloff 2007). When a speaker shapes a turn at talk as the *first pair-part* (FPP) of a specific type of adjacency pair, for example by asking a question or making a request, s/he puts the delivery of an appropriate second pair-part (SPP) in next turn on the interactional agenda. *Ja hoor* and *nee hoor* are regularly used for doing confirmation in a SPP turn, as illustrated in extract 1.² Mrs. L has called the travel-agency desk to change her holiday booking. In discussing an alternative destination, she inquires as to whether one of the places she is considering is ‘pleasantly crowded’ (line 1). The desk employee confirms with *jah hoor*:

- (1) Travel-agency call 1 (cf. sound file [MP-1-Travel agency call 1.wav])
- 1 MsL: maar u weet zeker dat 't ook
but you know surely that it also
but you know for sure that it is also
- 2 gezellige drukteh=e huh[ihs:..
pleasantly crowded is
pleasantly crowded.
- 3→ Dk1: [jah hoor:..
yes hoor
yes hoor.

Confirmation with *ja/nee hoor* can be called ‘marked’ in the sense that confirmation can also – and is more commonly – be done with *ja/nee* alone (see Stivers *forthc.*). Extract 2 shows both forms of confirmation. Here a mother calls her son, who is in a boarding school and has returned there after a weekend at home, to ask how he is. In line 4, the son confirms his mother’s interpretative elaboration of his answer to her opening question with *ja hoor*. In line 7, he confirms her subsequent comment with *jah*: alone:

- (2) Phone call mother and son (cf. sound file [MP-2-Mother and son.wav])
- 1 mth: hoe is 't:?
how is it
how are things?

2. Note that in Dutch, an agreeing response token’s polarity has to match that of the statement it agrees with (Mazeland 1990, Jefferson 2002). Thus, in the context of a negative statement an agreeing response can be done with *nee* (‘no’) (see extract 10). This is why we label the confirmation format *ja/nee hoor*.

- 2 son: GOED hè
good TAG
good hè
- 3 mth: zo: van je bent wel goed aangekO:m['n?
so like you are PRT well arrived
well like you've arrived safely indeed?
- 4→ son: [ja hoor.
yes hoor
yes hoor.
- 5 mth: j:a:h (weer binne. and'rs) zulle we 't wel-
yes again inside otherwise) will we it PRT
yes (in there again. otherwise) we will indeed-
- 6 anders hadden we het wel gehoord h[è?
otherwise had we it PRT heard TAG
otherwise we'd surely have heard it, right?
- 7→ son: [jah:!
yes
yes!
- 8 (0.4)
- 9 mth: zo:. hoe was ('t) vandaag weer op schoo:l
so how was (it) today again at school
so. how was your day today at school.

It would seem reasonable to assume that the particle *hoor* performs some secondary operation on what is being done by *ja/nee*; the question is, of course, how we can characterize this operation. As a first observation, we can note that both 'unmarked' *ja/nee* and 'marked' *ja/nee hoor* responses are mostly used for doing preferred seconds – that is, SPPs that do agreement with the FPP. In other words, preference organization does not appear to play a role in conditioning the variation between *ja/nee* and *ja/nee hoor*. More likely, doing confirmation with *ja/nee hoor* is used for managing other aspects of the interaction. What other aspects is the question we will try to answer in the following section.

3. Doing confirmation with an eye on the encompassing activity

Most confirmations with *ja/nee hoor* in our corpus are responses to queries and requests of various kinds. Three types can be discerned in terms of the action done in the FPP turn and the line of development the sequence is furthering. In the first type, *ja/nee hoor* confirms a query which has a recognizable purpose in a more encompassing course of action. In the second type, *ja/nee hoor* is used in response to questions that

implement requests. In the third type, the format is used in response to topic proffers. We discuss these three types in turn.

3.1 Type 1: Casting confirmation as fashioned for the larger course of action

The first type of use of *ja/nee hoor* occurs in responses to requests for confirmation which are part of a larger course of action and which test a contingency for the progression of this course. Extract 3 provides an example. It occurs 1.5 minute earlier in the travel-agency call from which extract 1 was taken. Mrs. L wants to change her holiday booking and is considering an alternative destination. She inquires after its touristy qualities by first reporting an assessment of it (lines 1–2), then asking whether it is a crowded place (line 7). Both queries are confirmed with *ja/nee hoor* (lines 4, 9):



(3) Travel-agency call 2 (cf. sound file [MP-3-Travel agency call 2.wav])

- 1 MsL: (en) dat >zegge ze< dat 't ook heel e:h
(and) that say they that it too very
(and) this one they say that it must be very u:h
- 2 leuk moet we:zeh
nice must be
nice as well
- 3 (.)
- 4 Dk1: ja hoor. da's op zich ook best
yes hoor that-is in itself also rather
yes hoor. that's in principle also
- 5 wel leuk. e:h (is) ook wel 'n vrij e:h
PRT nice is also PRT a rather
quite nice indeed, u:h (has) also does have a pretty u:h
- 6 (1.1) vrij groot plaatsje.
rather big place
(1.1) pretty big village.
- 7 MsL: ook druk?
also crowded
also crowded?
- 8 (0.2)
- 9→ Dk1: 'n beetje- ja hoor:.
a bit yes hoor
a bit- yes hoor.
- 10 (1.6)
- 11 °hm.°

The caller's queries occur in an epistemically non-neutral context. Each incorporates a claim that must be confirmed for the course of action of which the query is

part – settling on an alternative holiday destination – to be furthered. Moreover, the formulation of each query articulates the alternative that is most likely to advance the larger course of action in a direction that matches the speaker's concerns (cf. Pomerantz 1988): the first inquiry invites confirmation that the holiday resort *is* nice; the second one that the resort is indeed crowded. For each of the caller's queries, the desk's use of *ja/nee hoor* provides a preferred response – that is, the kind of response that is articulated as preferred in the design of the customer's question turns, and which furthers the decision-making activity in the direction in which the customer is recognizably heading.

It may be noted that in both sequences the desk displays that the basis for doing confirmation is far from strong. Her response to the first query, *ja hoor* is followed by a downgraded assessment: the customer's *heel leuk* ('very nice', lines 1–2) becomes *op zich ook best wel leuk* ('in principle rather nice indeed', lines 4–5). That is, after confirming the customer's query, the desk modifies the terms of the query: she does not agree with it without restraint (see Raymond 2003: 166–211). In the next sequence, the desk's response moves from partial to full confirmation. Before expressing confirmation with *ja hoor*;, the desk offers a response in which the terms of the question are modified: '*n beetje*- ('a bit-', line 9). This response asserts a state of affairs rather than complying with the *yes/no*-choice set by the form of the customer's question. Such 'non-type-conforming' answers often signal the speaker's resistance to the terms of the question (Raymond 2003, also this volume). In this particular case, the desk does not complete the nonconforming response, but restarts with *ja hoor*: – an answer design that is not only type-conforming, but also an upgrade: the desk now expresses a full confirmation of the query. The speaker moves in an interactionally traceable way from partial to full confirmation. This may undermine the reliability of the basis for doing confirmation: the self-repair shows doing full confirmation as a second choice (cf. Jefferson 1974). Note that the desk does no further work to remedy the full confirmation's endangered trustability, although this might be what the caller is waiting for in the 1.6 seconds silence following the response in line 10.

Extract 3 shows that doing what would appear to be full confirmation with *ja/nee hoor* does not preclude that the basis for confirmation is tentative and open to moderation. In both sequences in extract 3, the desk delivers the response turn in ways that allow the recipient to observe a divergence between the full confirmation done with *ja/nee hoor* and weaker forms of confirmation perspiring in cues provided in the same turn. The desk observably tilts her response towards doing full confirmation. She is showing that she "chooses" (see Schegloff 2007: 172) to confirm the customer's query, rather than to provide a more balanced response that would reflect the facts. The reasons for this seem obvious. Full confirmation advances the course of action the customer's queries are implementing, while weaker forms of confirmation might thwart its advancement.

Extract 4 provides a similar example. Real estate developer Willem has called his contact in the city administration at home in the evening to informally discuss the

administration's modification of a zoning plan that threatens to undermine arrangements Willem's company has made for building a row of houses. Adriaan has advised Willem to initiate legal proceedings against the administration, but Willem prefers to solve the matter in the meeting he will have the next day. In extract 4 he inquires – for the second time in the call – as to whether the arrangements with his company are laid down well within the administration (lines 1–2):

(4) Willem

(Phone call real estate developer (Willem) with his personal contact in the city administration (Adriaan))

- 1 Wil: •h en intern ligt dat toch ook goed
and internally lays that PRT also well
and you're sure this is also laid down well
- 2 vast [Adriaan.
down
internally ((name))?
- 3→ Adr: [ja!
yes
yes
- 4 (.)
- 5 Adr: dat [is ook zo:,]
this is also that-way
that's that way indeed,
- 6 Wil: [dat gesprek] van- •h van: e:h •hik denk
that talk like like I think
that talk like-like u:h I think
- 7 dat dathh (0.2) eind mei of begin:- dat we
that that end May or beginning that we
that at the end of May or the beginning- that we
- 8 dat eh: toen 'n keer: (.)
that then a time
that uh then a time
- 9→ Adr: JĀ:h hoor!
yes hoor
yes hoor!
- 10 (0.8)
- 11 Wil: dat ligt toch int[ern hebbe]n jullie toch
that lays PRT internally have you PRT
that is laid (down) internally- you do
- 12 Adr: [°absoluut.°]
absolutely
absolutely.

- 13 Wil: ook [notities (o[ver?)
also notes about
have minutes about this don't you?
- 14 Adr: [hrngm. [JAwE:l:
yes+PRT
((scrapes)) yes we do
- 15 we hebben daar toch- we hebben daar toch
we have there PRT we have there PRT
we do have indeed- we do have indeed
- 16 gespre:ksnotities van enneh,
meeting-notes of and
meeting notes of this don't we and uh

Willem ignores Adriaan's first attempt to respond with *ja* ('yes', line 3) and extends his query in a third-turn repair (Schegloff 1997) in which he specifies the approximate period of the talks he is inquiring about (lines 6–8). Adriaan then responds with *JA:h hoor* (line 9). His response turn has several features that show his eagerness to close the sequence and to ward off more talk on the issue Willem is pursuing. First, he preemptively cuts off further articulation of the query by responding before Willem has finished his turn. Second, by not elaborating his response, allowing for the emergence of a noticeable silence after *JA:h hoor*, he proposes that the latter should suffice as a full confirmation of Willem's query. This silence is comparable to that in line 10 in extract 3. In both cases, the speaker negotiates – in fact, attempts to enforce – sequence closure by not elaborating on the *ja/nee hoor* response.

We may now begin to account for the contribution of *hoor* in doing confirmation. The sequences considered so far suggest that *hoor* retro-actively highlights the programmatic character of the speaker's confirmation. Although the terms set by the co-participant's query may not be met with respect to every possibly relevant detail, the use of the tag shows the speaker chooses to provide the unconditioned, sequentially preferred type of response 'for all practical purposes.' The speaker protects his response against elaboration with details and particulars that may lead to sequence expansion and a less preferred sequence outcome. Instead, he shapes the response as a preferred SPP that promotes sequence closure (Schegloff 2007) and that will push the interaction over the sequence boundary.

Note that in neither case the recipient of the *ja/nee hoor* response immediately embraces the proposal to close the sequence: the subsequent silence is also the result of the recipient delaying to take a next turn. This may be an indication of the recipient's understanding of *ja/nee hoor* as a programmatic confirmation. In extract 4, Willem pursues an alternative response by redoing his query (see Pomerantz 1984). In particular, he revises the query's terms from *goed vastliggen* ('laid down', lines 1–2) to *notities over hebben* ('having notes', line 13), forcing Adriaan to commit himself to a more specific state of affairs. As in the case of extract 3, then, there are features in the interaction which suggest that confirmation with *ja/nee hoor* is used to propose sequence

closure although the speaker's response might be open to moderation. By using the marked confirmation format, the speaker displays his response as motivated by contingencies above the local sequence level and this is what the recipient seems to worry about in both cases.

In conclusion, in response to queries testing contingencies that are relevant for the advancement of the larger course of action, *ja/nee hoor* responses not only accomplish confirmation, but also cast doing confirmation as – programmatically – fashioned by considerations with respect to the progression of the more encompassing activity.

3.2 Type 2: Confirming questions implementing requests

The second environment in which *ja/nee hoor* occurs in our corpus is similar to that described above in that it can be said to involve orientation to the progression of a more encompassing course of action. In this case *ja/nee hoor* is used in response to requests. Consider extract 5. Joop is calling for Hetty's husband, Hans.



(5) Phone call to family phone 1 (cf. sound file [MP-5-Family phone 1.wav])

- 1 Het: Hetty Driebergen
((name))
((name))
- 2 Jop: da:↑g, met Joop Jansen,
hi with ((name))
hi, this is ((name))
- 3 (.)
- 4 Het: HAllo[↓:.
hello.
hello.
- 5 Jop: [hallo. >is Hans ook< thui↑:s?
hello is ((name)) too home
hello is ((name)) also home?
- 6→ Het: ja hoor. ik zal 'm ev'n roep'n.
yes hoor I shall him briefly call
yes hoor. I'll call him right away.
- 7 mom[ent hoor!
moment hoor
just a moment hoor!
- 8 Jop: [ja! (.) bedankt
yes thanks
yes! thanks
- 9 (38.0)

Joop's question in line 4 as to whether Hans is at home does *double duty* (Schegloff 2007: 73–78): it functions as a practice for making the *request* to get Hans on the phone. The relevancies mobilized by such double-layer first pair parts may be responded to in a response turn that is parsed into distinct slots: (i) the response-to-the-interrogative slot, and the (ii) the response-to-the-action slot (see Raymond 2000: 196–208, and this volume). The basic order of these slots reflects the asymmetric action-logic dependency of the response to action upon the response to the question. In her response turn (lines 6–7), Hetty first answers Joop's question with *ja hoor* and then grants the request that the question is implementing *ik zal 'm even roepen* ('I'll call him right away', line 6). Notice that *hoor* is part of the TCU in the response-to-the-interrogative slot rather than the response-to-action slot.

As in extracts 3 and 4, *ja/nee hoor* in extract 5 occurs in an environment in which the speaker enables progression of the course of action initiated by the recipient. Our corpus does not contain any instances of *ja/nee hoor* in responses to questions implementing requests which block progression. In the latter context, we find *ja/nee* alone. Extract 6 is a case in point. The caller's question as to whether her friend is at home is answered negatively, with the single-word TCU *nee!* (line 3). While in extract 5, *ja hoor* is followed immediately by a TCU in which the speaker delivers the response-to-the-action, in extract 6 the call taker expands the response-to-the-interrogative slot with two more TCUs in which the whereabouts of the non-available person are explained (lines 4–7).



(6) Phone call to family phone 2 (cf. sound file [MP-6-Family phone 2.wav])

- 1 MvH: met Van Hoof?
with ((name))
((name)) speaking?
- 2 Mar: met Marieke Oudenhoven. is Nynke er oo:k?,
with ((name)) is ((name)) there also
((name)) speaking. is ((name)) there?
- 3 (0.3)
- 4→ MvH: nee! die is op- schoolreisje. die e:h
no she is on school-trip she er
no! she's on a school trip. she er
- 5 (0.8)
- 6 Mar: o[:h.
oh
oh.
- 7 MvH: [(komt) na zes uur.
comes after six o'clock
(will be home) after six o'clock.
- 8 (0.5)

- 9 Mar: oh. (.) dan eh
oh then er
oh. (.) then er
- 10 >probeer ik 't dan nog wel 'n keer.<
try I it then PRT a time
I'll try again then.
- 11 (0.2)
- 12 MvH: ja! okay hoor?
yes okay hoor
yes! okay hoor?
- 13 Mar: okay[:.
okay
okay.
- 14 MvH: [do[ei:..
bye
bye
- 15 Mar: [doei.
bye
bye

Extracts 7 and 8 allow for further comparison between *ja/nee* and *ja/nee hoor* responses, and provide evidence that the addition of *hoor* to *ja/nee* displays an orientation on the speaker's part to progression within the more encompassing activity. In line 8 of extract 7, the customer responds with *ja hoor* to the desk's request for permission to call her back, and the desk initiates the follow-up sequence that is made possible by the customer's confirmation.



(7) Travel agency call 3 (cf. sound file [MP-7-Travel agency call 3.wav])

- 1 Dk2: ik moet namelijk de aanbetaling eh binnen
I must namely the down-payment within
you see, I have to receive the down payment
- 2 vijf dagen binnen he[bben.
five days in have
within five days
- 3 MsW: [oh maar da's geen
oh but that's no
oh but that's no
- 4 probleem. dan kan ik zelf wel even brengen dan.=
problem then can I self PRT just bring then
problem. then I can bring (it) myself then.
- 5 Dk2: =nou dan is 't verder geen pun:t.
well then is it further no problem.
well then it's not a problem any longer.

- 6 >maar kan ik je dan toch bellen om< te:h
but can I you then still call to
but can I still call you in order to
- 7 d[oor te geven] of 't gelukt is?=
pass-on if it succeeded is
pass on if it's worked?
- 8→ MsW: [ja hoor.]
yes hoor
yes hoor.
- 9 MsW: =(j[ah.])
yes
yes.
- 10 Dk2: [en je telefoonnummer i:s?
and your phone-number is?
and your phone number is?

Two minutes earlier in the same call, the desk made the same request after receiving the specifications of the holiday Mrs. W. wants to book. At that point, the customer confirmed the desk's question with *j:ah!*



- (8) Travel agency call [Ut2] (cf. sound file [MP-8-Travel agency call 4.wav])
(2 minutes earlier in the same call as extract 7)

- 1 Dk2: mja[:h en >kan ik (je) daarover terug bel↑len?<
yes and can I you there-about back call
m-yes and can I call you back about this?
- 2 MsW: [(°en dan°)
and then
and then
- 3 (0.9)
- 4→ °eh° j:ah! >maar ik ↑had eigenlijk< 'n: vraa:ggeh?=
yes! but I had actually a question-DIM
uh yes. but I did have a question actually?
- 5 Dk2: =j:a:h?
yes
yes?
- 6 (.)
- 7 MsW: als 't nog vrij is,
if it still free is,
if it's still vacant,
- 8 (0.3)
- 9 Dk2: ja:h,
yes,
yes,

- 10 MsW: wilde ik e:h als 't kan morgenavond- (.) komen
 wanted I if it can tomorrow-evening come
I wanted if it's possible to drop by to
- 12 bespreken. kan je 't vasthouden dan?
 discuss can you it retain then
talk about it tomorrow evening. can you put it aside then?

Notice that unlike *ja hoor* in extract 7, *j:ah!* in extract 8 is immediately followed by a *pre-pre* (Schegloff 1980), and the subsequent proposal of settling the booking in person (lines 7–12). Asking for permission to call back is the kind of making arrangements that is typical for moving towards call closure (Schegloff and Sacks 1973). In extract 8, the customer does not align with the course of action that is prefigured in the desk's question, and blocks the movement to call closure in the second TCU of her turn. This strongly suggests that by adding *hoor* to an otherwise unmarked confirmation by *ja/nee*, the speaker displays an orientation to the larger course of action in which the FPP is embedded, and signals that the way is free to advance in that course of action.

3.3 Type 3: Doing alignment without affiliation

In the preceding two sections, we have described how *ja/nee hoor* is used as an SPP that provides confirmation in a way that marks the speaker's orientation to the FPP's purpose within a larger course of action. Here we show that, particularly in the environment of double-duty FPPs, doing confirmation with *ja/nee hoor* is used to align with prior turn without really collaborating with the action the prior speaker proposes. We focus on two specific environments: responses to assessments inviting agreement, and responses to topic-proffering questions.

Starting with responses to assessments inviting agreement, consider extract 9. It is taken from a call of two middle-aged sisters, Hetty and Ella. Their disabled sister, who lives in a home, is staying at Ella's place for the weekend, and Hetty calls on the first morning of her visit. The day before, Ella had called Hetty about the visit and inquired about the new clothes Hetty had bought for their sister. In extract 9, Hetty returns to this issue by inviting agreement with the assessment that the new clothes suit their sister well (line 1). Ella confirms Hetty's assessment with *jA:h hoor*: (line 2):



(9) Return call sisters (cf. sound file [MP-9-Sisters.wav])

- 1 Het: maar dat stijet haar wel lEÜ:K hÈ:?
 but that suits her PRT nice TAG
but this looks pretty nice on her, doesn't it?
- 2 Ell: jA:h °hoor[:°
 yes hoor
 yes hoor

- 3 Het: [passe ('s:) [de::h- schOenen=
fit the shoes
do the shoes fit
- 4 Ell: [(°m-°)
- 5 Het: =ook an:?=
too on
well too?
- 6 Ell: =jahh!
yes
yes!
- 7 (0.3)
- 8 Het: no[u↓:h
so
so:
- 9 Ell: [ja:h, ziet 'r goed ui:t!
yes, looks good PREP
yes, looks great!
- 10 Het: jah die bin'n <ook wel mooi:> [toch?
yes these are too PRT beautiful PRT
yes these are rather beautiful too, don't you think?
- 11 Ell: [jah. ja.
yes yes
yes. yes.
- 12 zeker we:t['n.
certainly know
certainly.
- 13 Het: [ja:h
yes
yes
- 14 (0.3)
- 15 nou: gelukkig:.
so fortunately
well I'm glad about this.

Ella's expression of agreement in line 2 is minimal, and by marking the confirmation as motivated by programmatic considerations, she signals possible resistance to the terms of agreement. This resistance becomes clear in the continuation of the interaction. After Ella's *ja hoor*, Hetty posits an evaluatively more neutral question about another detail of their sister's outfit (lines 3–5). When this question is also receipted with

a minimal response (line 6), she prompts for elaboration with *nou* (line 8),³ and Ella then responds (line 9) with an upgrade of the assessment in line 1. Hetty treats this upgrade as an appropriate response by overtly agreeing with it (line 10).

While Ella aligns with her sister's initial assessment by confirming it with *ja hoor*, she does not comply with the action that is implemented in it. There are two aspects of Hetty's assessment that Ella may resist. First, Hetty herself has bought the new outfit that is the object of her assessment. In other words, Hetty can be heard as fishing for a compliment when she assesses the new clothes positively. By merely confirming the assessment with *ja hoor*, Ella at first passes on making a compliment. Second, first assessments evaluating issues both participants have access to constitute a context in which participants may do subtle negotiations about who has more or better rights to assess the matter at hand (Heritage and Raymond 2005). By making herself the first speaker to assess their mutual sister's clothes, Hetty may claim epistemic primacy regarding the clothes she has bought. Moreover, by tagging the assessment with the confirmation-soliciting prompt *hè?*, she displays the assumption that Ella will agree with the position presented in the assessment.⁴ By confirming her sister's assessment with *ja hoor*, Ella not only withholds a compliment; she is also working on "the terms of agreement", resisting the claim of epistemic primacy implicated in her sister's assessment. With *ja hoor*, she formally aligns with the format of prior speaker's turn while exploiting its closure-implicativeness to avoid collaborating with the situated particulars that are co-implicated with it.

We find a similar type of use of *ja/nee hoor* in the environment of responses to topic-proffering questions. In this context, *ja/nee hoor* is used to confirm an action that promotes the opposite of sequence closure: while in most sequence types, the delivery of a preferred response is closure-relevant, following a topic-proffering question the preferred response furthers elaboration (Schegloff 2007: 169–180). Extract 2, partially repeated below, is a case in point. The mother's question in line 1 launches the first topic of the call. When the son responds in a minimal fashion only, the mother formulates a more specific inquiry (line 3). This inquiry is receipted with *ja hoor* (line 4):

3. The use of the particle *nou* (lit. 'now') in line 8 is very similar to the use of stand-alone *so* in English as described by Raymond (2004). Like stand-alone *so*, stand-alone *nou* prompts a responsive action that the recipient has not yet appropriately delivered. The understanding documented in Ella's response to *nou* shows that she hears it prompting for a less pro forma type of assessment of their sister's new outfit.

4. Heritage and Raymond (2005) describe how English tag questions like *isn't it?* are used to downgrade epistemic claims associated with first-position assessments. The Dutch tag *hè* rather seems to underline the speaker's claim with respect to epistemic primacy. Instead of inviting the recipient's agreement, it presumes agreement as a mutually shared perspective.

- (2') Phone call mother and son (Detail from extract 2) (cf. sound file [MP-2-Mother and son.wav])
- 1 mth: hoe is 't:?
how is it
how are things?
- 2 son: GOED hè
good TAG
good hè
- 3 mth: zo: van je bent wel goed aangeko:m['n?
so like you are PRT well arrived
well like you've arrived safely indeed?
- 4→ son: [ja hoor.
yes hoor
yes hoor.
- 5 mth: j:a:h (weer binne.) (...)
yes again inside
yes (in there again.)

The son's *ja hoor* is again a minimal response to his mother's topic-proffering inquiry, and is treated as not furthering elaboration: the mother continues by elaborating on the topic herself (line 5). As in the case of *ja/nee hoor* confirmations of assessments inviting agreement, *ja/nee hoor* confirmations of topic-proffering inquiries express alignment with the prior turn, but at the same time signal that the recipient is not going to comply with the invitation to elaborate on the topic that has been made relevant by the inquiry. Doing confirmation with *ja hoor* functions in this context as a 'no elaboration' response (cf. Raymond 2000: 185–195). The *hoor* tag provides a shield against the sequential implications that are also made relevant in the first pair part. It may be noted that this use of *ja/nee hoor* is therefore different from the uses discussed in previous sections with regard to preference organization. While responses to queries and requests are cast as preferred continuations that enable progression within the larger course of action, aligning responses to assessments or topic proffers do so without complying with the line of action that is proposed in the FPP-turn.

4. Prosodic characteristics of *ja/nee hoor*

We will now turn to the phonetics of *ja/nee hoor*. All instances were subjected to impressionistic auditory and acoustic analysis. Particular attention was paid to the pitch

contour associated with *ja/nee hoor*, and four recurrent contours were distinguished.⁵ In what follows we describe these in terms of their distribution across the sequential-interactional contexts we have distinguished so far.⁶

4.1 Type 1 and 2 uses of *ja/nee hoor*

In fragments in which *ja/nee hoor* is used to confirm a course-of-action-furthering query (Type 1) or to confirm a question implementing a request (Type 2), we find two recurrent contours, which we label FALL and RISE. Instances with a FALL contour typically start impressionistically high in the speaker's range and fall early in the form, leveling mid-range. Instances with a RISE start impressionistically low in the speaker's range and rise to mid or high, either gradually through the phrase as a whole or, more commonly, towards its end. We will also discuss instances with FALL-RISE, a pitch contour we consider as a variant of FINAL-RISE contours. Instances with FALL-RISE start impressionistically high in the speaker's range and early in the form. However, rather than ending level, they end with a rise to mid or high.

The FALL contour is most frequent in our collection. As an illustration of this contour we can revisit extract 3; it is repeated here in part as extract 3'.

- (3') Travel-agency call (Detail from extract 3) (cf. sound file [MP-3-Travel agency call 2.wav])
- 1 MsL: (en) dat >zegge ze< dat 't ook heel e:h leuk
(and) *this one they say that it must be very u:h nice*
- 2 moet wē:zeh
as well
- 3 (.)
- 4→ Dk1: jah hoor. da's op zich ook best wel leuk.
yes hoor. that's in principle also rather nice indeed,

Figure 1 shows a pitch trace and waveform of the end of the caller's inquiry, and the desks response including *ja hoor*. It can be seen that in terms of pitch, *ja hoor* starts high and falls quickly and dramatically: from about 425 Hz to 210 Hz, or 12 Semitones.

5. It is worth pointing out that *ja hoor* and *nee hoor* are commonly 'contracted' into a single prosodic word, and many of our instances are hearable as monosyllabic. It therefore makes sense to consider the pitch contour of *ja/nee hoor* as a whole, rather than attempting to isolate *hoor* in each case.

6. The FPPs to which instances of *ja/nee hoor* respond form a heterogeneous set prosodically. In Dutch, declarative statements interpreted as questions – so-called 'declarative questions' – and *yes/no* interrogatives have been shown to have predominantly rising contours in experimental and Map-Task speech (Haan 2001, van Heuven and van Zanten 2005, Lickley et al. 2005). In our collection, we find both rising and falling contours (cf. Englert forthc. on Dutch, and Selting 1995 and Kügler 2007 on German), but we do not discuss these contours in detail here.

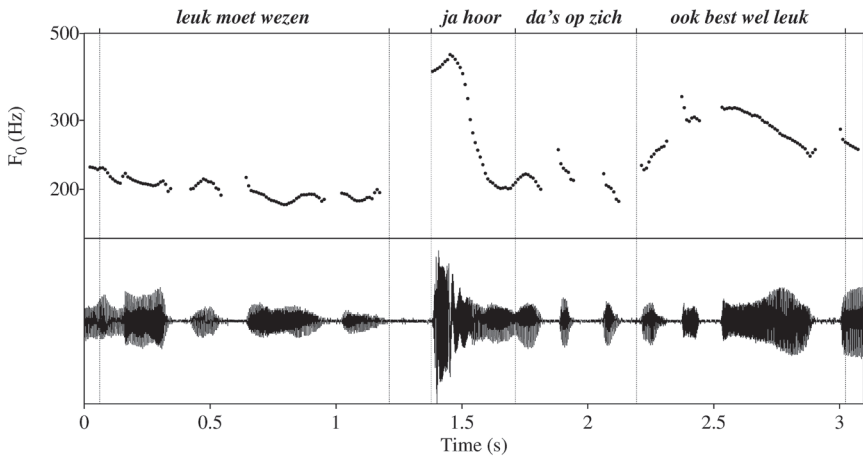


Figure 1. Segmented pitch trace and waveform for lines 1–3 of extract 3, illustrating FALL

The subsequent TCU, *da's op zich ook best wel leuk* ('in principle also rather nice indeed, line 4) starts at the latter level, rising to a peak on *best wel*. Notice that the pitch at the start of *ja hoor* is substantially higher than the pitch throughout the latter part of the prior turn, *leuk moet wezen*. That is, the onset of *ja hoor* is noticeably high in the immediate context.

As a further illustration, consider extract 4'. As explained above, *ja hoor* (line 9) here does a programmatic full-confirmation of the prior query, which is testing a contingency that is relevant for the negotiations Adriaan is talking about with Willem:

(4') Willem

(Phone call real estate developer (Willem) with his personal contact in the city administration (Adriaan). Detail from extract 4.)

6 Wil: [dat gesprek] van- •h van: e:h •h ik
that talk like-like u:h I

7 denk dat dathh (0.2) eind mei of begin:- dat we
think that at the end of May or the beginning- that we

8 dat eh: toen 'n keer: (.)
that uh then a time

9→ Adr: JA:h hoor!
yes hoor!

Figure 2 shows the falling contour of *ja hoor*, which again starts noticeably high in the immediate context. In this case the fall is from about 175 Hz to 130 Hz, which corresponds to 5 Semitones.

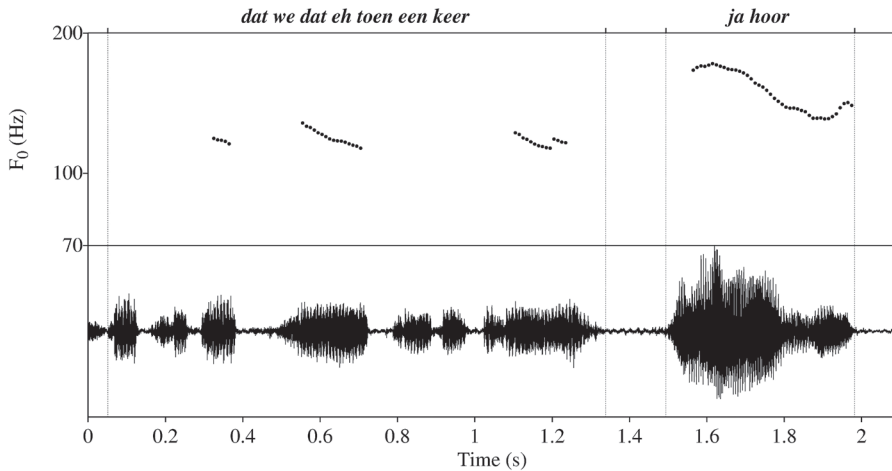


Figure 2. Segmented pitch trace and waveform for lines 7–9 of extract 4, illustrating FALL

As an illustration of the RISE contour we can consider extract 10, which has not been discussed in Section 3. This fragment contains one instance of *ja hoor* and two instances of *nee hoor*, all of which convey the message that the caller, who is worried that the holiday destination under consideration is not very bustling, is worrying needlessly.



(10) Travel-agency call (cf. sound file [MP-10-Travel agency call 5.wav])

- 1 MsL: maar u weet zeker dat 't ook
but you know surely that it also
but you know for sure that it is also
- 2 gezellige drukte=ehuh[ihs:..
pleasantly crowded is
pleasantly crowded.
- 3→ Dk1: [jah hoor:..
yes hoor
yes hoor.
- 4 MsL: ik [hou van drukte hoor.
I love crowdedness hoor
I do love crowdedness hoor.
- 5 Dk1: [hihuh
- 6 MsL: niet da 'k e[:h met z'n tweeën
not that I with the two-of-us
not that I u:h am sitting alone on an isle
- 7 Dk1: [•hh huhuh •hih.
- 8 MsL: heemaal op 'n eilandje alleen zit.
entirely on an isle alone sit
with just the two of us.

- 9 want die [t_ij_d hebbe w[e gehad.]
 because that time have we had.
because that time was over long ago.
- 10 → Dk1: [hhh [nee hoor,] dat is
 no hoor that is
 no hoor, that's
- 11 echt niet zo:
 really not so
really not the case.
- 12 (0.3)
- 13 MsL: nee:h?
 no
no?
- 14 → Dk1: nee hoor,
 no hoor
no hoor,
- 15 (.)
- 16 MsL: o:kay. nouh-, •h moet ik dus per se eve
 okay well must I so necessarily just
okay. well so do I have to
- 17 langskome om te laten annulereren?
 come-by to let cancel
come by to make cancellations?

Figure 3 shows that *jah hoor:* (line 3) has the FALL contour illustrated above. As seen in Figure 4, however, the two instances of *nee hoor* have a rising contour. The rise is slight on the first instance, although impressionistically clearly hearable as different from level.⁷ The second instance of *nee hoor*, which functions as a separate TCU, shows a more obvious rising contour with a final rise from about 200 to about 290 Hz (6 Semitones).

A relevant question at this point is, of course, whether the FALL and RISE contours can be associated with distinct functionalities. We propose that the FALL contour is the normal, unmarked contour for doing confirmation with *ja/nee hoor* in the environment of queries testing speaker concerns with respect to the progression of the larger course of action. Instances with a RISE contour occur in a more specific context: namely, in responses to queries that indicate that the speaker is not able to fully accommodate

7. Part of the reason for this may be that *nee hoor dat is echt niet zo* ('no hoor that's really not the case, lines 10–11 in extract 10) is formatted as a single prosodic phrase, without any significant discontinuity in terms of pitch, amplitude or temporal organization between *nee hoor* and *dat is echt niet zo* – despite the fact that on grammatical and pragmatic grounds, the two phrases constitute separate TCUs. The prosodic phrase as a whole shows a gradual rise to the main accented item *echt*, of which *nee hoor* forms the onset.

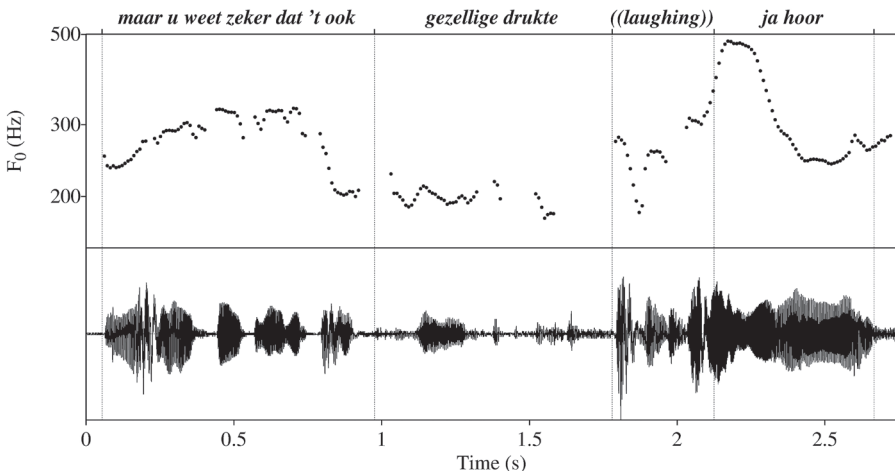


Figure 3. Segmented pitch trace and waveform of lines 1–3 in extract 10, illustrating FALL

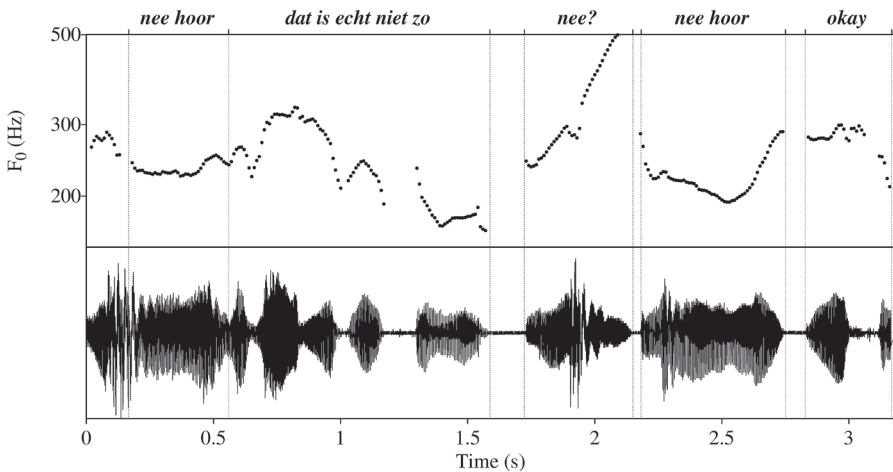


Figure 4. Segmented pitch trace and waveform of lines 10–16 in extract 10, illustrating RISE

the information or action in prior turn – for example by challenging or checking some aspect of it. The instances of *nee hoor* in extract 10 are a case in point. The first *nee hoor* (line 10) confirms what *ja hoor* has earlier confirmed: that the holiday destination is bustling. When the customer further challenges the desk's reassurance in line 7 with the polarity repeat *no?* (line 13) (Englert 2008), the desk re-asserts her position with a second *nee hoor* – this time produced in the clear, with a RISE contour which marks it out as different from the earlier *ja hoor*. We suggest that the marked prosody may be used as a technique for prompting the recipient to take a stand on the action that is

re-asserted in it. This is exactly what the recipient does in next turn: she accepts the assurance with *okay* (line 16).

Our analysis suggests that the FALL-RISE contour is comparable to the RISE in terms of its contextual distribution. That is, it seems useful to distinguish between ‘unmarked’ FALL and ‘marked’ FINAL-RISE contours, where the marked contours index the reinstatement of sequential relevancies deferred by the prior inquiry.

4.2 Type 3 uses of *ja/nee hoor*

While Type 1 and 2 instances of *ja/nee hoor* are very similar in terms of observed pitch contours, the no-elaboration use of *ja/nee hoor* illustrated in Section 3.3 are markedly different in our collection. Among these, we find no instances of the FALL and RISE contours described above. Rather, we find two recurrent contours: FALL-RISE and a contour we label LOW LEVEL. Instances with this contour start impressionistically low in the speaker’s range and do not change significantly.⁸

As an illustration of the FALL-RISE contour used for doing non-affiliating confirmation, we can revisit extract (9). As explained above, Ella’s *ja hoor* (line 7) here constitutes a reserved response to Hetty’s assessment.

- (9) Return call sisters (Detail from Extract 9) (cf. sound file [MP-9-Sisters.wav])
- 1 Het: maar dat stiet haar wel lEU:K hĒ:?
but this looks pretty nice on her, doesn’t it?
- 2 Ell: jA:h °hoor[:°
yes hoor

Figure 5 shows that *ja hoor* starts high, rising quickly to 500 Hz, then falls to around 200 Hz, and rises again towards 400 Hz in the latter part of the phrase. Notice that the start of *ja hoor* matches the final pitch of the prior question closely. This is the case with the FALL-RISE instances in this context more generally: while in the Type 1 and 2 fragments discussed above, *ja/nee hoor* invariably starts noticeably high or low in relation to the immediately prior turn, the non-affiliating instances with a FALL-RISE do not involve a pitch upstep or downstep at the onset.

Finally, as an illustration of the LOW-LEVEL contour we can again revisit extract 2. As explained above, the son’s *ja hoor* (line 4) constitutes a minimal response to his mother’s immediately prior elaboration of his similarly minimal answer to her initial question. Figure 6 shows that *ja hoor* is realised with level pitch around 120 Hz. As such it constitutes a marked downstep from the immediately prior question, which is realised with a final rise.

8. Together, the FALL-RISE and LOW LEVEL contours account for all seven Type 3 fragments in our collection.

(2'') Phone call mother and son (Detail from extract 2) (cf. sound file [MP-2-Mother and son.wav])

- 1 mth: hoe is 't:?
how are things?
- 2 son: GOED hè
good hè
- 3 mth: zo: van je bent wel goed aangeko:m['n?
well like you've arrived safely indeed?
- 4 son: [ja hoor.
yes hoor

Again, a relevant question is whether the FALL-RISE and LOW-LEVEL contours can be associated with distinct functionalities. At this point we do not have a clear answer to this question. In particular, it does not seem to be the case that instances of *ja/nee hoor* that do confirmation of an assessment have different prosodic characteristics from instances that confirm a topic-proffering question – but our collection is small. What does seem clear is that an analysis in which a FALL-RISE contour is taken to project continuation by the same speaker (see Gardner 2001 and Szczepek Reed 2004 for references) is not applicable here: in the context under consideration, *ja/nee hoor* is typically *not* followed by same-speaker talk. The occurrence of LOW-LEVEL contours in the context under consideration is perhaps more easily accounted for, with reference to our analysis of Type 3 instances of *ja/nee hoor* as marking non-affiliation in the course of action initiated by prior turn. Low pitch and monotony have been found to be associated with non-affiliation in previous work: see for example Müller's (1996) analysis of 'continuers' in English and Italian. Still, this leaves the differentiation of the two attested pitch contours unexplained.

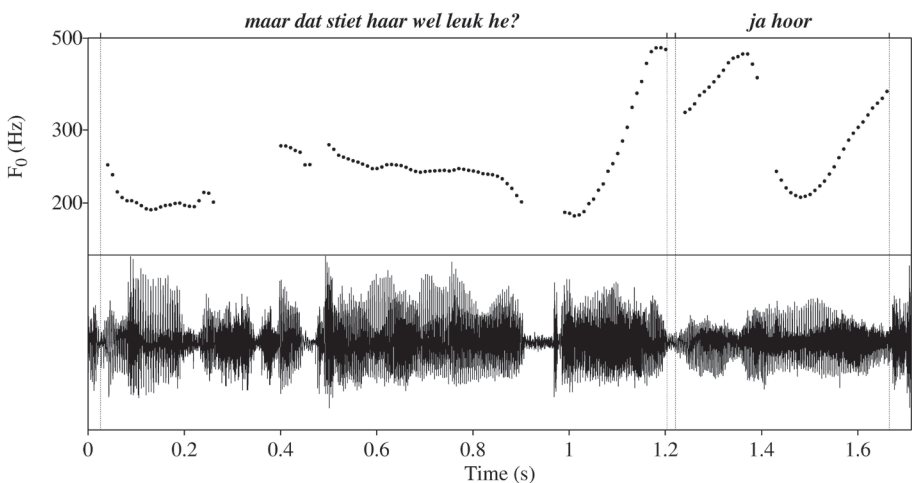


Figure 5. Segmented pitch trace and waveform of lines 1–2 of extract 9, illustrating FALL-RISE

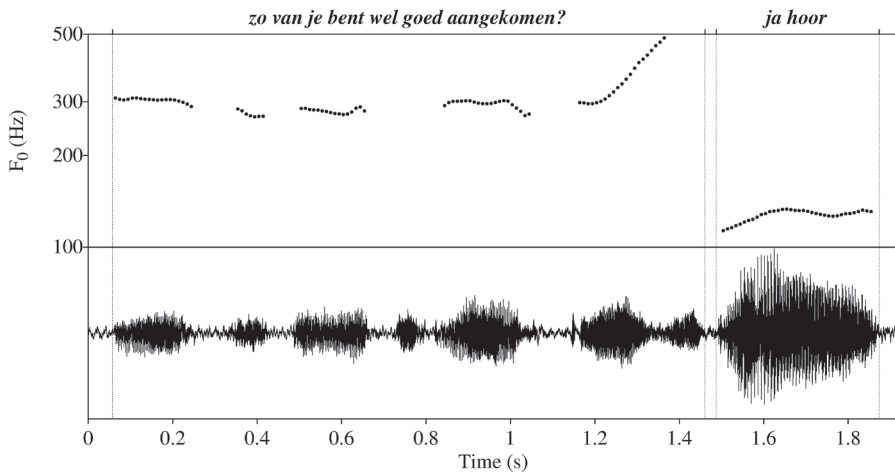


Figure 6. Segmented pitch trace and waveform of lines 3–4 of extract 2, illustrating LOW-LEVEL

5. Summary and discussion

In this article we have offered observations on the sequential-interactive and prosodic characteristics of the confirmation form *ja/nee hoor* in a corpus of Dutch talk in interaction, as part of a larger effort to account for the form and function of the discourse particle *hoor*. We have shown that *ja/nee hoor* is used as a marked confirmation form in sequentially specifiable context types. When it is used as a response to queries and requests, the speaker marks doing confirmation as programmatically motivated with an eye on the larger course of action in which the ongoing sequence recognizably participates. The speaker links multiple levels of interactional organization. He does not just do confirmation as a response to prior turn, but he displays doing confirmation as directed towards contingencies above the sequence level.

Since doing confirmation is a preferred type of response that makes sequence closure relevant, the *ja/nee hoor* format may be used in environments that further sequence expansion, as a device for resisting such expansion. For example, while a *ja/nee hoor* response to a topic-proffering query does confirm prior speaker's question, it is heard as declining doing more talk about the topic. Contrary to responses to queries and request that show the speaker's orientation towards advancement and progression within some more encompassing activity, the speaker's orientation to relevancies above the sequence level here does not result in advancing the project of prior speaker, but rather indicates the speaker's reservation against social relevancies that are co-implicated in the design and the action of prior turn. Again the format is used for doing

multiple tasking on different levels of interactional organization, but its use engenders different consequences.

Thus, *ja/nee hoor* combines local relevancies with more global orientations in a relatively small number of sequential-interactional contexts. This confirms that doing confirmation in a sequence is usually not an action in its own right, but contributes to some more encompassing activity in which the local sequence takes part (Raymond 2004: 192–199). With reference to Kirsner et al's work on *hoor* (Kirsner and Deen 1990, Kirsner et al. 1994, Kirsner 2000, 2003), our analysis confirms that detailed contextual analysis is necessary if we are to make progress in understanding the particle's meaning and function. In fact, it highlights the importance of considering the sequential-interactional context of individual instances of use: it is arguably this context that informs our intuitive interpretations of the particle as 'doing reassurance' or 'doing emphasizing'.

Moreover, we have shown that the sequential-interactional analysis also provides insights into the prosodic variation associated with *ja/nee hoor*. Our observations suggest that prosodic design is sensitive to both the local relevancies and more global orientations engendered by *hoor*. We have shown that the particle *hoor* is associated with more recurrent pitch contours than a reading of previous literature might suggest, which are distributed systematically across the three contexts of occurrence we have distinguished. It is worth noting the frequent association of *ja/nee hoor* with the FALL contour, which does not sit easily with Kirsner and Van Heuven's (1996) finding that utterances with *hoor* sound most "natural" with a high boundary tone. It is of course possible that *ja/nee hoor* is distinct from 'clause + *hoor*' in this respect, and we hope to address this issue in further research.

As it stands, our findings are more in line with those of Caspers (2003, 2004), who reports that as a response to a *yes/no* question, *ja* is commonly realized with a falling contour, although listeners judge a range of contours as acceptable in this context. Caspers does not consider the functionality of this range of acceptable contours, and we have arguably made little progress on this front: we have so far been unable to come up with clear definitions of the functionalities of the pitch contours associated with *ja/nee hoor*. But perhaps this is an unrealistic goal in work on prosody in interaction (cf. Schegloff 1998, Sczcepek Reed 2004): given the sensitivity of prosodic patterns to levels of organization in addition to that of turn-taking, abstracting 'core meanings' of the type proposed by Kirsner and colleagues almost inevitably involves glossing over complexities at some of these levels.

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Appendix. Main transcription conventions

Sequential relations

sp[<u>eaker</u> -1	left-hand brackets mark the onset of simultaneous talk of a
[spr-2	second speaker
sp[<u>eake</u>]r1	right-hand brackets indicate where a speaker's utterance stops
[yes]	relative to the talk of another speaker
(0.7)	length of a silence in tenths of a second
(.)	a silence less than 0.2 seconds
text=	latching of turns by two speakers
=text2	

Pitch movement

.	final pitch fall
,	slight final pitch rise
?	strong final pitch rise
↑	noticeable local pitch rise in the syllable (part) after the arrow
↓	local pitch fall

Other sound production features

accent	an underlined segment is noticeably accented
goo:d	noticeable sound stretch
•hh	hearable inbreath (each <i>h</i> indicates a duration of roughly 0.2 seconds)
hhh	hearable outbreath (each <i>h</i> indicates a length of roughly 0.2 seconds)
cut off-	cut-off production
lhaughihngh	laughter
CAPitals	a capitalized segment is noticeably louder than surrounding talk
°quieter°	a segment between degree signs is noticeably more quiet than surrounding talk
>faster<	the pace of a segment between carats is noticeably faster than surrounding talk
(guess)	an utterance part in brackets is an uncertain hearing